

four

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SAINT JOAN OF ARC

By Carl Mierisch

Efficiency and Holiness

• Sr. M. Jeanne, O.S.F.

SOME time ago I was talking to one of the college art students about the uneven character of her work. She is an intelligent girl, gifted in art, and, as we say, a "born leader," but she was not working to the level of her capacities and she knew it. She said: "I can't make up my mind. I don't know whether I want to be a 'good kid,' a good artist, or a good Catholic." She reasoned: "I can't be a 'good kid'—socially acceptable and 'one of the bunch'—and still be a good artist because of the discipline and dedication required by the artist's profession. Granted that it's more important for me to be a good artist rather than a 'good kid,' I don't see how I can become a good artist and be a good Catholic at the same time. If I'm going to be an artist, I'm going all the way, and there won't be any time left for being a good Catholic."

Her problem was not to resolve the antinomy between being a Catholic and being an artist, between the Heavenly City and the Earthly one, but to decide to which one she would give her total allegiance.

Until that moment she hadn't realized that hers is not a question of being a Catholic or an artist. It is not a matter of choice, exclusive of an alternative, but rather a question of how to accept simultaneously two calls: the vocation to be a Christian as well as the vocation to be an artist. It is impossible to achieve perfection in either one without accepting the other. There can be no total dedication to one. No matter how hard she tries, she cannot dedicate herself totally to art unless she studies purposes, human needs, good things due and desired. When she considers these things, she is being a Catholic. And she can't possibly be a *whole* Catholic unless she tries to be perfect in her making.

As Catholics we must necessarily be concerned with the *final* aspect of things made or to be made, and as artists we must necessarily be concerned with the *formal* aspect of these things. It is the old question of the relationship between the virtue of prudence and the virtue of art. Prudence—which concerns the good of the person who makes or uses what is made—is superior to art only in regard to the final cause of the thing made—its purpose or use, whereas art—which concerns the good of the work itself—is superior to prudence in the formal, material, and efficient causes of the thing made. Neither prudence nor art can be practiced in isolation and each must be practiced according to this essential hierarchy. Any attempt to make either one autonomous is to render prudence sterile and art void.

For example, a person of prudence and piety who neglects art—one who knows nothing about the essential holiness of things, what they are in essence—can work havoc with the thoughts and imaginations of others. This can happen in a number of ways.

1) Too many of the visual aids that are used in schools, the pictures and statues used for divine worship, are made or selected by pious persons who are not at all concerned with the artistic merit of the things *in themselves*. As a result, the very purpose of using visual aids for religious purposes is vitiated from the outset. We teach students, children as well as adults, that the saints were heroic men and women whom we should try to emulate, but we think it not incongruous to show them pictures of be-ribboned, sentimental weaklings. Certainly, it is childish to cherish the delusion that the religious subject matter compensates for lack of artistic merit, and undoubtedly there is need to question the vitality of a Faith content with so many religious inanities: statues that glow in the dark, pictures in which movement on the part of the spectator causes the eyes of the "holy" one to open or close, etc.

2) Secondly, a prudent person who neglects art and is, therefore, ignorant of the sacramental character of things, can unwittingly deny their essential holiness by forcing "cheap" materials, wood, plaster or papier maché, to simulate effects of "nobler" materials. If such a person could not afford a stone or hardwood floor in a cafeteria, he would not think it unreasonable to use "marbleized" or "simulated wood" linoleum. And when such deceptions are found in the house of God, how crude is our insult to the God of Truth.

If evil effects result from the autonomy of prudence over art, comparable evil effects can result from the apotheosis of art, art for art's sake. An artist who denies or ignores the role of prudence in the production of a work of art—one who neglects to dedicate his creative powers to a useful or desirable end—is condemned to sterile automatism by the very fact of his refusal to come to grips with reality.

As Gerald Vann says so well: "A terrible responsibility rests upon artists . . . in a world like our own which has so largely forgotten art in its daily life. If they deliberately turn their treasure into a toy, if they deliberately address themselves to a cultured clique and ignore and despise the masses as past redemption, they are fighting on the side of evil because they are refusing their responsibility to the world. If they use their power to deify humanity or to deify themselves, they are fighting on the side of evil because they are leading men to idolatry instead of wholeness, they are reinforcing instead of fighting the original sin."

This evil prevalent in the world of art can be traced directly to the denial of man's true vocation to be a Christian, a prudent man who properly orientates himself and all created things to Christ.

With the individualism, the glorification of self during the late middle ages and thereafter, man lost his sense of corporateness with Christ. In a later century, this gave rise to notions that the individual could, through his own powers, unaided or uninstructed by a visible Church, attain perfection without an ordained priesthood, without an infallible Church as

interpreter, without a pope, visible representative of Christ on earth, without any need to orientate all material things to the service of God and man.

In the confusions of this newly found religion, which was a cult of individualism, men forgot that without Christ we can do nothing. The logical outcome of such individualism is known today as secularism, which denies the importance of man's dependence on Christ, denies the role of prudence in the conduct of human affairs as well as in the production of works of art. And the artist, without the guiding light of prudence, has the choice of abandoning rationality and becoming a cog in the wheel of industrialism, or else he can try to become an "artist" set apart, dedicated to the cult of self-expression.

Examples of this divorce of prudence from art are manifold. Perhaps a new low was reached—if not actual bottom—when blank canvases on stretcher frames were hung like collages, edge to edge, in a recent exhibition in California—and they were seriously received.

Or, in a milder form, but one not less pernicious in its effect, is the alienation of prudence from art evident in the current cult of "style," in which students are not encouraged to be original in solving artistic problems arising from human needs, but rather to be original "in the idiom of" a well-publicized painter or sculptor.

Art cannot live when it is divorced from the needs of life. And life takes its orientation from prudence. Prudence and art must be integrated, for there is no perfection without both. Hence, the Catholic and the artist must be one. There is no choice.

This problem which was so vital to the college art student is one that seems to be characteristic of our day, for it faces the professional artist, the teacher and the dealer in works of art—each in a different way.

For the professional artist, the problem may be expressed in the antinomy between a four or five figure salary for the "good" of the *worker*, and a complete dedication to the good of the *work* which can be, directly or indirectly, a means of sanctification for himself and others. Or it may be that which is expressed in the conflict between personal rights and group needs—the right of an artist to express his vision of the truth as though he alone, or a particular elite, deserved to benefit by its expression, in spite of the fact that the masses of society may be starved for lack of that very truth.

For the professional artist, these apparent conflicts are not alternatives. They must be resolved in a synthesis in which the demands of a full Christian life find deep roots in holiness and are met in the particular circumstances of his vocation as artist. He must be a leaven in the society of which he is a part. He cannot be a Sunday Christian—servant of Christ—and a week-day artist—servant of mammon—without suffering moral schizophrenia.

For a teacher the problem assumes much greater proportions because

of the countless intellectual and moral disorders which can result from her failure to recognize even the existence of a problem. Are we training students to be so efficient in their practice of the arts that they may take their place among the "72% of the graduates from our college (who) earn more than \$4,000 a year," or are we training them to be so efficient in their practice of the arts that they can alleviate the needs of life—spiritual as well as material—and thus repair the integrity of human nature, their own as well as others'?

Certainly it is true that no amount of piety will compensate for lack of skill, but it is equally true that skill, devoid of piety, can never justify the existence of our Catholic schools which offer training in the arts. If our students learn to be efficient but not holy, if they learn all the tricks of the trade but are never directed to their charitable use here and now, then we have no business teaching, for we are doing a disservice to the cause of Christianity.

The Christian synthesis can only be achieved by reconciling the two apparent contradictories: efficiency and holiness. In every case, the spiritual is primary and it must render fruitful—in prudence and charity—any efficiency acquired in practice of the arts. For the Christian, success in the artist's profession (measured in terms of money, social distinction or security) must be subsidiary to success in the apostolate of the arts (measured in terms of meeting the needs of society in restoring all things to Christ).

The world *demands* efficient artists to meet its material wants, but it *needs* holy ones to combat its spiritual diseases. Therefore, our Catholic schools have no choice in the matter of fostering the formation of artists who are, potentially, eminently efficient as well as heroically holy.

The dealer in works of art—he who buys or sells the things the artist makes—is also faced with a comparable dilemma. The world dictates: "See how much you can get for how little you have to pay. That's just good business."

Christianity, on the other hand, formulates principles of distributive justice and insists on the right of a worker to a just wage. The apparent antinomy between the desire for acquisition of wealth and for distributive justice at the same time, can be resolved if both patron and artist have the courage to act according to the truth that if they "Seek . . . first the kingdom of God and His justice . . . all these things shall be added . . ." unto them.

The problem may be expressed, as we have said, in many ways: By a *student*: "I don't know whether I want to be a good artist or a good Catholic." By a *professional artist*: "Christianity may be well and good, but haven't I a right to earn as much money as I can to lead a respectable life as an artist?" By a *teacher*: "These college students have spent twelve or more years in a Catholic school. Isn't it about time we treat them as adults and show them how to carve their niche in the world and earn fame as

well as an easy dollar?" By a *dealer*: "How can I possibly do business in this day and age without a mark-up of 200%?"

And our answer to each of these questions will depend on our estimate of the importance of the demands made on each of us as citizens of this world at the same time that we are potential citizens of the next. As a future citizen of heaven, a Christian will not fear to be a scandal in the eyes of men; as a citizen of earth, he will "render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and will give himself loyally to the tasks here below. Like St. Paul, he must be all things to all men. He must embrace everything in man and in his works—except sin—so that he may restore all these things to Christ.

As Christians, it is not a matter of choosing between alternatives:

- between citizenship in the Kingdom of God and in the kingdom of the world;
- between holiness required of a citizen of heaven and efficiency demanded of a citizen of the world;
- between success in the apostolate of the arts and success in the world of art.

Our commitment as Christians is not a choice, but an obligation to achieve a synthesis in the simultaneous acceptance of two vocations: our vocation to be another Christ—an extension of Christ in our modern world—and our vocation to embrace the particular circumstances of our temporal existence as artists, avoiding concession or compromise, in order to be a leaven and thereby restore to Christ that part of his kingdom which still awaits redemption through us.

As our Holy Father Pope Pius XII said: "Thank God for our present problems, for it is no longer permitted anyone to be mediocre."

● *The 1953 MLA Convention*

Many of those who attended the Modern Language Association Convention in Chicago during the Christmas recess heard Arthur J. Scouten's paper on "Recent Definitions of Romanticism." Dr. Scouten summarized and quoted liberally from an article by Morse Peckham which appeared in **four quarters**. A major thesis of Dr. Scouten's paper was the change evidenced in the concept of Romanticism as outlined in Morse Peckham's significant contribution to PMLA (LXVI, ii), and that suggested in his more recent discussion in **four quarters** (II, iv). Reprints of Dr. Peckham's **four quarters** article "Is Poetry Self-Expression?" are available to subscribers and interested readers of **four quarters**. Address the Editor.

Two Stories

Willows

● Leslie Garrett

"CAN you hear them?" she breathed. "They speak in whispers." Emily Prentiss was sitting by the window, leaning out into a dead still night. "Sometimes I think," she said slowly, quietly, "that the souls of children live in those willows; that they're talking to me. I think sometimes that that tree is their own special Paradise, a separate Heaven." She was breathing the air, sucking it into her, listening. "Can you hear them?"

Charlotte went to the window, touched her sister's shoulder, and listened too. She was the younger of the two by five years. She was sixty-seven. "Oh yes," she said quickly, "I hear them. I do."

The room was dimly lighted. It was a silent room—voiceless and full of shadows. In it the two sisters had sat, each evening after dinner, for twenty-three years. It was a custom. Charlotte would sew or read, and Emily—she would sit by that window and listen to those sounds, those voices; or walk outside the window in the garden, humming softly, still-breathing. In that room, at night, after Charlotte had gone to bed, Emily would sit at her desk which looked out into the garden and write poetry. She had done this ever since the death of her husband twenty-three years ago—since she had first returned to the house. She had not many poems. She

wrote only on nights such as these, when she was drawn to it by some inner compulsion, when she felt moved to express those delicate thoughts, capture them. What poems she did have, Emily Prentiss kept, tied and folded, in a drawer of her desk. They were all carefully copied in a strong, clear hand, and dated. She had a special paper, a scented bond of subtle pink, on which she transcribed the finished piece.

"I wonder," Emily said after a pause, "whether they can hear us too—those poor dead children. Do you think so, Charlotte?"

Charlotte ran her hand softly across the window sill. She smiled, turned slowly to the window. She did not answer.

They both sat silently for a moment and then Charlotte returned to her chair and again took up her knitting. She was making a shawl for Emily. It was light blue, with a border of yellow flowers. She enjoyed knitting things for Emily. She loved Emily.

"Do you remember," Emily started, looking for the first time from the window, "when we were children how we used to tell stories about those trees?"

"Oh yes," Charlotte said gayly. "We would have picnics out there. Mother would fix a basket and we'd pick flowers and make wishes on them. You had such a wonderful

imagination, Em. You could make up such *beautiful* stories. I always said, even then, that you should have been a poet. Like the time . . ."

Emily sighed and turned again to the window. She remembered—sometime, long ago, far off—she had written a poem about those willows—and the poor dead children who whispered there at night. It was a beautiful poem. She had had no trouble at all making it rhyme. When Reverend Simpkins came to-night she would read that one to him too. He would like it. He liked beautiful things.

Charlotte looked up from her knitting, spoke. "It's nearly eight, Em. He'll be here soon."

Emily glanced at the clock. "I was just thinking I would read him that poem I wrote on the willows particularly."

"Do, Em," Charlotte exclaimed. "It's so beautiful. I think it's your best. That and the one you wrote about poor dear Mrs. Evans when she died."

"Yes," Emily agreed, "they were my best. I felt them." One hand dropped slowly to her breast, touching. "She was a sweet person. I cried over that one."

Charlotte shook her head in agreement. "You always did feel things so—so deeply. I remember what Mrs. Thompson said about that poem. She said she cried when you read it that night."

Mrs. Thompson was a member of a literary club to which Emily Prentiss also belonged. They met each Wednesday night, served tea and cakes, and read to one another. Emily Prentiss was conceded to be

the finest poet in the group. All of the ladies said so.

It was Mrs. Thompson who had persuaded Emily to have her poems privately published. Reverend Simpkins was to hear them tonight and make arrangements for the printing. He was a fine judge of writing. Mrs. Thompson had said so. Each month he wrote a religious poem which was published in the *Christian Herald*. He was a very well-read man.

"It's eight o'clock," Charlotte said, getting up. She took her knitting and went to the door. "Shall I make the tea?"

Emily sighed, turning, rose tall from the window and went to her desk. "Yes, please. Did you get the chocolate cookies?"

"Yes. I got half a dozen. Will that be enough?"

She had opened the desk drawer now, taken out the bundle, and removed the ribbon. "I should think so," she answered. "I do hope he likes them." Then she sat down and wrote out a check for twenty-five dollars. She would give this to Reverend Simpkins—a donation to his church—so that he would not think her unappreciative.

Reverend Simpkins sat in the little room, listening. Now and then he would bite softly into a cookie, sip noiselessly on his tea. Once or twice he nodded in appreciation of a line which he considered particularly charming. He thought Emily Prentiss had a fine ear, a delicate touch. She had a genuine talent for rhyme. Her rhymes were always so natural—not in the least bit forced.

She read to him eight of her

poems—two quatrains and a sonnet included. He was particularly impressed with the poem Emily had written on the death of Mrs. Evans. He had known Mrs. Evans too.

He said he knew a printer in Mobile who would publish them for her at a very moderate cost. The printer specialized in private printings. They agreed that it would be done very simply—without ostentation, and that thirty copies would be the ideal number. She planned to present a copy to all her friends and, of course, each member of her literary circle. Reverend Simpkins asked if

he might not have a copy too—auto-graphed by the poet, of course.

Emily said she would be happy to.

When Charlotte again entered the room, Emily was alone. She was once more by the window.

Charlotte approached quietly, stood by her sister. One hand touched lightly Emily's shoulder. Her voice was light, expectant. "Well, did he like them? Did he say he would have them printed?"

"He said they were very fine poems," Emily answered.

Charlotte returned to her knitting.

All I Remember

● Tom Kimon Doulis

MY FATHER paused in his monologue and took a sip of the red wine. It already had begun its effects on me, making it difficult to focus my eyes on him as he spoke. He was telling me of his life in America as a young immigrant.

He put the wine glass down and stared off into space for a moment. This is a great habit of his, so I said nothing and waited for him to pick up the narrative again.

I studied his hard features, the hard face of a man who had left his mother and home at thirteen and travelled 5000 miles so that he could work and pay off the debts that his parents had incurred.

"You know, America was very different then." A smile played across his lips. The wine was making his eyes stare. "Very different.

Most of us foreigners couldn't speak English . . . and there was plenty of us. You could go for days in one of those coal or steel towns and never hear any English.

"We were tough, too. We had to be. Thirteen hours of hard labor at a stretch would put muscles on any man. There were no unions then so if you didn't want to work for two dollars a day . . . well . . . you could starve."

He stopped and was quiet for a moment. I could hear my mother in the next room darning socks. After the socks would be sewed, she'd snip the remaining thread with her scissors.

"I never had much of a childhood. How could I, working thirteen hours a day, but I mean I never enjoyed myself as you boys do nowadays. Never did we have time for sports,

we were in a strange country, did not know the language, afraid to speak to the girls because they might laugh at the way we talked, and we never had enough money because we'd have to send whatever we saved to our parents to bring them out of their debt."

He stopped and toyed with the small wine glass, tilting it with a clock-wise motion so that the wine would lap the edge of the glass. Once the red wine spilled over the lip of the glass and stained the table cloth. He studied the pattern that the wine made on the cream-colored table cloth for a moment. Then he raised his head abruptly.

"We lived in Homestead then. That was before I married your mother. I think it was in 1923. I lived with your uncle and ten others from the Island of Chios. Six worked at night and the other six worked in the day. That way we needed only six beds.

"We had three rooms near the steel mill. Most of us foreigners lived in that neighborhood. All kinds of people.

"Eleven Poles lived upstairs and there were fourteen Italians downstairs in our building. It was something like a Tower of Babel. We couldn't make friends with the other boys because we could not speak to each other, and we did not have the time.

"Well, this winter that I am thinking of, 1923, was the worst we ever had. The snow was piled high on the sidewalks and the temperature was never above freezing. It was so cold that most of the boys

stayed in the rooms even if a Harold Lloyd or a Charlie Chaplin movie was in town.

"We did not get to see girls much because few of the immigrants that lived around there brought their women and most of the American girls would have nothing to do with us.

"It was Prohibition then, so almost everybody drank. Some of our boys bought their drinks from an old Albanian who made the whiskey on his brother's farm. Your uncle and I did not drink much because we wanted to send the money home.

"Like I said, the winter of 1923 was the coldest that I remember. We used to work every day and every other Sunday so that would give us one day off in two weeks. Once, I did not see my brother for one month, although we were sleeping in the same bed.

"The only day the steel mill shut down was Christmas, and after working straight through for many months without all twelve being together, it was a great thrill for us to sit down at the table and eat together. We had plenty of wine, not as good as this, and I drank a little bit too much maybe. After dinner we all sat around the stove and roasted chestnuts and sang.

"Everybody was off from work and you could hear the Italians downstairs and the Poles upstairs and the other nationalities across the street, singing. It was nice, that Christmas.

After a while I got tired of just singing songs and, I don't know, I guess I just felt sad, so I went down-

stairs and stood in the doorway and looked out at the snow piled up in the street and listened to everyone singing their own songs. It was nice.

"I guess I drank too much because before I knew it I was down the steps and making snowballs. I was laughing to myself. You know how boys like to make as many snowballs as they can? Well, I had about twenty when I saw a Lithuanian boy I once worked with walking on the other side of the street. I hid behind a big pile of snow until he came nearer and then I threw as many as I could at him.

"He fell down twice before he could get to his house and call his friends. Then they came. Four of them. They got right across the street from me and started throwing snowballs at me. I called my brother and he called the rest and they all came down and helped me. Then the Lithuanians did the same thing and pretty soon their whole house was fighting us and we called the Poles and the Italians.

"Only the younger men fought and you could see the older men looking out of the windows and laughing. Then we got tired of just throwing snowballs and we ran toward each other and wrestled in the snow and washed each other's face.

"After a while we could not tell who was our enemy and who was our friend so we tussled with whoever was near us. I guess we were just getting rid of the energy that you cannot get rid of with a pick and shovel.

"We fought for about a half hour and then it started getting colder so we all went back to our rooms. We changed our clothes and roasted chestnuts again and sang the same songs."

"You had a tough life, Pop," I said as softly and as sincerely as I could.

"Oh, I don't know. It wasn't that tough," he grinned. "You know? I don't want to sound sentimental, but when a man gets older, he sort of wants to look back and be able to say—'Now when I was young'; you know what I mean, have something nice to talk about. Well, that Christmas was something like that. It was . . . all I remember of my youth."

He stopped and looked at the white kitchen clock.

"Some day," he said, "I'd like to go back to Homestead. Just to see if those buildings near the steel mill are still up. Some day I'd like to walk down that street. In the winter, sometime."

● *fq Memoranda*

Insofar as it is possible for them to do so, the editors of *four quarters* desire to publicize regional and national conventions in the Arts and Sciences of probable interest to their readers. Floaters concerning the conventions of the Catholic Poetry Society of America and the Catholic Renaissance Society will accompany future issues. This service is conducted without charge. Chairmen of publicity committees are invited to write for information.

Trial by Television?

A Symposium on Method

● Dennis J. McCarthy, *Chairman*

DESPITE the oft repeated point that investigations conducted by Congressional committees are for the purpose of obtaining information which will aid Congress in drafting wise and sound legislation, the simple reality is that the televising of them has, in the popular mind, transformed such hearings into public trials. "Trial by Television" is a reality—not just a specious claim put forth by those who are opposed to current Congressional investigations.

Various Congressional investigations have been conducted in recent years before the klieg lights and the searching eye of the television camera and, through this marvel of modern science and industry, have been brought into homes, schools and taverns to be viewed by millions of understandably uncritical minds. They have been presented by the broadcasting companies as a public service—but are they a public service? This relatively new instrument of mass communication has been used extensively to bring certain Congressional hearings (those with audience appeal) before a mass audience—without having given sober, reasoned thought to all the complexities and ramifications of the televising of such proceedings. The basic question which Congress and the broadcasting companies should have considered is, "Will the total effect of such telecasting be to the true benefit of the public, the Congress, and the Federal Government?" We fear that this has not been done.

It is not the position of the authors of this article that those witnesses who appear before televised committee hearings are necessarily untainted innocents who are being persecuted by witch hunters; indeed it is not their purpose to consider innocence or guilt (nor is it the proper function of Congressional committees to do so). Rather, the authors' sole aim is to consider impartially the phenomena of televised hearings as such—trials by television, if you will. Therefore, they consider the position of *televised* Congressional hearings with respect to such pertinent aspects as the psychological position of the witnesses, the impact upon the mass audience, the proper function of committee investigations as a part of the general operations of Congress, the legal status of such investigations, the legal obligations and rights of witnesses, the "education" of the general public in the operations of government, and the ethical problems and moral principles which are involved in the whole phenomenon of televised hearings.

The Psychological Position of Witnesses

● Brother F. Vincent, F.S.C., *Psychology*

PEOPLE are not only funny, they are nearly always fascinating, mysterious, and challenging. It is this that makes every man a kind of psychologist, and every kind of psychologist a dedicated and absorbed observer of the human story. The psychologist, who by calling keeps his scientific eye glued to the keyhole of human behavior, is always alert to those changes in the passing scene, and to the new gimmicks and gadgets that appear, that may alter the things men do and the way they do them. Such have been the movie, the radio, the auto, war, depression, Hitler, Coué, and Rudolph Valentino—and such now are television and investigating committees.

Two of the areas of research in psychology that have been richer and more rewarding in what they have revealed of the peculiar behavior of man have been studies in the psychology of testimony, and studies in the special behavior of man when he acts, not as an isolated individual, but as a member of a group or in the presence of an audience. Strangely, while these are extremely vital areas of behavior, and we have learned much about them, not too much of this knowledge has been put to practical use to improve the instruments and situations in which they apply.

We have come to learn that the whole problem of the reliability of testimony is open to many misgivings. We know that under the most ideal conditions—where subjects expect the event, pay strict attention, are unemotional, know they will be questioned, and recall is immediate—people can remember with surety only about 50 or 60% of the facts of the witnessed scene; about 20 to 25% of the details cannot be recalled and about the same number of details are positive errors—fictitious ideas; about 20% of the errors will be reported as certainly correct. Add to these facts the dubious conditions that face the ordinary witness in a courtroom or any investigation reporting real life situations—such things as the ordinary forgetting process of time (as much as 70% in eight hours), the time element itself, the lack of attention at the time, the emotional frame of reference, the effect of suggestions, personal pride in one's accuracy, unwillingness to admit error or inability; fear, acting, and other conditions—and it is apparent how questionable testimony is at best. The interesting thing is the fact that the error is not a mere passing or obliteration of memory, but rather a positive thing in which the memory becomes populated with imaginary and false details which become increasingly clear and of which the subject becomes more and more certain.

Audiences always have strange effects on behavior, ranging all the way from the functional paralysis of stage fright to the hypermanic verbal fluency and up-staging ham-behavior of the exhibitionist or the man with

"mike fever." In the presence of an audience many people perform faster, with more or less accuracy—usually less—perform better, worse, or not at all, but they nearly always perform differently. Public testimony in an open court welds these two facets of behavior together in a very unique way. Two events have occurred in our own day to emphasize this kind of behavior, to broaden the focus of these areas of research, to intensify the factors involved and to render far more significant the importance of the results—these are investigating committees and television.

It would seem that whatever is true of the reliability of testimony and of reactions to audience, and especially of testimony before an audience, would be much more true, more elaborate, and more severe in televised investigations, since the facts to be gathered are often deeper, more remote, more emotionally toned, motivated more personally, and of more serious consequences, and since the audience has stretched from the few hundred of the courtroom to the millions of television.

It would also seem to this author that the gathering of information of special interest to the investigating committees is almost a clinical kind of thing. Wherever the sought-for information is hidden, deep-seated, freighted with emotions, very personal, involved with guilt, deeply, personally, and often unconsciously, motivated—as is generally true in loyalty and similar investigations—the techniques of the physician, the psychiatrist's office, the detective, or the priest would be to better purpose. The rapport the friendly confidence, the objective, "let's do what we can to help" approach, the absence of fear, blame, pressure should be much more effective in dredging the facts that are unpleasant to face or obscure. The psychiatrist's couch with its soft lights and quiet music is a much over-drawn picture, and mostly erroneous, but one can hardly imagine a psychoanalysis being conducted in a public square.

To belabor the popular phrase, investigating committees, supposedly, are interested only in getting the facts and improving things; they are not instruments for blame or the passing of judgment or for punishment; they are not trials. In this sense they are not unlike the doctor in his office, the psychiatrist by his "couch," the detective in his quiet pathways, the spiritual counselor in his confessional. In spite of all the risks to accuracy involved in the public trial, they are justified—it is a calculated risk—for the crime has been public and demands a public trial. Moreover, the dangers of a private trial, as illustrated in Russia, so far outweigh the difficulties of audience effects, that they must be strictly avoided. It may well be that after the facts of disloyalty, communistic activity, etc., are developed, public trial may be required to punish the crime, but it seems to me that public witness to the investigation itself would be as inhibiting and distorting as a microphone or television camera in the doctor's office where one's kidneys would be on public exhibition. Some people may be proud of their kidneys and boast about them; some may be embarrassed and hide.

This attempt—or any attempt—at analysis at this time is hostile to everything psychologists stand for. Psychologists are dedicated to drawing conclusions about human behavior from facts scientifically established through research, not from mere conjecture. To our knowledge no research on this very special problem has yet been done. What has been suggested here is a possible and probable projection into a broader field of what has already been established in a more narrow but similar field. This problem would seem to be one that would well lend itself to much interesting and very worthwhile research on the part of some eager psychologist.

Impact Upon the Mass Audience

● Donald N. Barrett, *Sociology*

THE impact of Congressional investigating committees upon the larger society through the medium of television publicity has been only too infrequently analyzed. The sociologist is constantly faced with the problem that most people consider themselves experts in social analysis *because* they are presumably participating members of society. The insuperable obstacle is that few even see the *need* for refined conceptual and carefully scientific study of any social phenomenon. Such is the case here—everyone *believes* he *knows* the effect of television committee hearings upon the entire public.

Being somewhat more cautious it is imperative that we briefly consider some of the relevant aspects of this viewing public. Today the major needs of the individual are not satisfied within one inclusive social group, such as the extended family of our colonial ancestry. Thus these needs must be satisfied through associations devoted to specific values and through individual search, e.g., for job, social, fraternal, religious and other satisfactions. The sociological literature on social class stratification is replete with evidence that, other than occupational, familial, and perhaps religious affiliations, the bulk of American society gives few indications of many forms of social participation. As one traces this phenomenon from upper through lower classes this principle becomes more pronounced. It is also true that the job, family, and church are becoming more specialized and therefore command more segmental loyalties in the individual personality. Consequently, larger sections of our population are cut off from channels of power, information, growth, and a sense of participation in purposive social action and must satisfy their needs through mass forms of commercial recreation and entertainment. Under such circumstances the impersonal quality and fleeting character of his social relations create a personality alienated from the social structure and submerged in an unstructured mass of similar personalities. In

this way we can explain the public's increased susceptibility to skilled propagandists who develop techniques for manipulating the mass personality.

No one questions the fact that information on issues vital to the survival of our nation is essential. When, however, this public information becomes over-balanced toward one position of a controversy and when the mass audience is led to judge on the basis of the limited evidence given, such information becomes patent *propaganda*. The television hearings give evidence of the same problem as that pointed out recently by the International Press Institute, a highly respected organization, which recommended to the world press greater balance, perspective, and background in the coverage of foreign news, such as their false estimates of what is of "general reader interest" and what is wrongly interpreted as "strictly sectarian" matters (the raging religious persecutions in communist controlled areas of Europe and Asia). Evidence of this lack of balance in the television hearings has been indicated by Congressman Keating, of New York, who said that every person called upon to testify should have the absolute right to be accompanied by a counsel of his own choosing and also should be given the opportunity to submit prepared statements as long as they are reasonably brief and relevant. This is frequently not done, but the mass audience does not recognize this or even evaluate it.

Through the long conditioning of the movies and picture magazines in our culture, television has been taken over in stride by the mass personality as a medium of fantasy stimulation and vivid emotional titillation. Compounding this problem with television's lulling of the critical faculties due to its ease of acceptance, we have as a result a highly plastic audience with little discriminatory desire passing judgments on issues on which they firmly believe they are competent because of the great quantity of newspaper and television materials presented. In addition, people are conditioned to be argumentative as a form of entertainment and as a consequence those arguing the questions often do not perceive the tremendous import of their conclusions in terms of elections based primarily on "anti" feelings, mass hysteria, the drift toward security achieved through violent reactions to fear, not critical judgment based on balanced evidence.

From the above factors it is not difficult to understand why the public cannot distinguish three of the functions of the hearings: a) as informative and educational, b) as preparation for new legislation, c) as judicial. It is typical of mass personalities in a controversy to paint issues in terms of black and white, and thus the judicial element of the television hearings becomes paramount. It is typical of the critical person to suspend judgment when evidence is lacking, but the uncritical find it easier to say "guilty" to one who pleads the Fifth Amendment or more recently the First Amendment. Recently a University of Notre Dame College of Law panel debate on this issue reported Mr. Telford Taylor, former chief prosecutor at the Nuremberg War Trials, as criticizing the

"illusion of investigative omnipotence." This is becoming so much more apparent today in the minds of television viewers that Mr. A. Fortas, former Undersecretary of the Interior, in tracing the course of Congressional Investigations since 1938, could say: "Their failure to present an objective and a balanced statement of facts results in causing many of our people to exaggerate or distort the dangers to our country and the ineffectiveness of our law enforcement agencies, and is causing many others, who are repelled by the disorderly work of such committees, to underestimate and unduly discount the problem."

People, Politics and Politicians

● Robert J. Courtney, *Political Science*

CONGRESS enacts legislation and a part of its lawmaking power is the power of inquiry.

We (The Supreme Court) are of the opinion that the power of inquiry—with process to enforce it—is an essential and appropriate auxiliary to the legislative function. . . . A legislative body cannot legislate wisely or effectively in the absence of information respecting the conditions which the legislation is intended to affect or change; and where the legislative body does not itself possess the requisite information—which not infrequently is true—recourse must be had to others who do possess it. (*McGrain v. Daugherty*, 273 U.S. 135. 1927.)

Much progress has been made through such inquiries, and through this power Congress has discovered much valuable information. Unfortunately, this power—like all power—is subject to abuse, and the investigations have many times lacked fairness and impartiality. However, the contention that power will be abused is no ground for denying this power.

With the advent of television a powerful instrument for influencing public opinion appears. The truth of this became quite evident with the effect of TV during and after the special investigation by the Crimes Committee. The Chairman of the Committee became a national figure and if it were not for political manipulations in the party's national convention, the well dressed man might now be wearing a coonskin cap instead of a homburg. Even the Committee Counsel did not go unnoticed, but had an opportunity to have his day in the political arena.

Evidence such as this does not go unnoticed by those whose (political) lives depend upon influencing voters. If politicians use their positions for political influence, we should not be dismayed—it is part of the system. The individual and his party are constantly engaged in the war of politics—and victory yields a successful politician. Should we be so unrealistic as to believe that one can be a politician today—a statesman tomorrow?

Remedies, however, can result if the politicians in the position to regulate the abuses are convinced that the benefits are being derived by the political few, or if the people exert sufficient pressure on their law-makers to correct existing abuses. But we must remember that voters are partisan and partisanship is not conducive to objectivity—or the pressures which could correct the abuses of the power to investigate.

Rights and Safeguards

● C. A. J. Halpin, Jr., *Law*

UNDER Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution of the United States, the judicial power is vested in “. . . one Supreme Court, and in such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish . . .” Quite clearly then, no judicial power—to decide rights; to redress wrongs; to declare innocence or guilt—rests in any other branch of our government.

The sole purpose underlying a separate and independent judiciary is the quest for the calm, orderly, and unemotional realization of truth. To further safeguard this quest, our Constitution affords the accused the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury; the right to be informed in advance of the nature of the charges against him; the right to confront witnesses and to cross examine them; the right to subpoena witnesses in his favor; the right to counsel; and finally, the right to be heard—to testify in his own defense. If but one of the above safeguards is abridged, can we say justice is being done?

During the past two years the American public has witnessed, via the television screen, various Congressional Committees investigating either crime or communism. Before such Committees hundreds of witnesses of varying degrees of reputation and involvement have appeared, voluntarily and involuntarily, to answer questions of the different committee members in their search for facts and information that will lead to the framing of wise legislation.

Admittedly, such investigations are a necessary function of the Congress, if wise and administrable laws are to be passed. Admittedly also, such persons as are called, have a duty to appear and make known the information which is theirs, unless by such testimony they might tend to incriminate themselves. It should be noted that the latter constitutional safeguard, which is a limited privilege, has no legal significance as to one's innocence or guilt. But should such investigations be televised to the American public? I advance the proposition that they should not, for the following reasons.

First, although such investigations are supposedly merely legislative inquiries, those witnesses appearing before such Committees are in a real

sense on trial before the bar of public opinion without those necessary safeguards to protect them before such bar. Furthermore, many who are only incidentally drawn into such investigations receive injury to dignity and reputation without there being in any way a commensurate gain to society.

Secondly, since in a real sense these hearings are in the nature of a trial, the public has no right to be present. Such presence is a violation of the rights of the appearing witnesses, for the right to a public trial belongs to the litigant—not to the public; to the litigant because if held behind closed doors, there would be nothing to prevent the reoccurrence of the old star-chamber methods and practices. The public has no right other than the proper administration of justice.

Finally, with intermittent telecasting and viewing, one-sided interrogation, facts on both sides not properly presented, and lastly, carnival atmosphere, should we let the public render a decision? I think not.

Education in Government

● C. Francis Sullivan, *History*

EDUCATIONAL television, with its qualities of authenticity, of reality, its dramatic impact and, above all, its immediacy, has been accepted with alacrity in the schools. The undeniable utility of television for conveying the current events lesson to school pupils will no doubt lead some to recommend the educational value for the mass (i.e., non-school) audience of programs exposing to the American public, among other things, the processes of government, the activities of public officials, the operation of the political apparatus, the formation of public opinion, and even the operation of those forces inimical to good government—crime and subversion.

Because the assumption of the educational benefits of television has been made without some necessary reservations, perhaps a few should be noted. No teacher is likely to admit that television is going to replace human leadership in the classroom. The manuals on audio-visual education stress certain cautions in its use. There is a danger that the medium effecting the greatest impact on the learner may inhibit the appreciation of other elements that would produce a well-rounded picture. For that reason the use of films and telecasts requires preparation and follow-up. These prevent distorted impressions. Moreover, television is a one-way communication. Subjects reproduced at a distance may not be questioned or called upon to extend any explanation of the facts or ideas presented.

The need for such precautions and the fact that the mass audience is not likely to resort to the press for an interpretive follow-up is illustrated in the reaction of the dear old soul to the recent Velde Committee hearings in Philadelphia. "There were so many," she murmured. The statements

on television and in the press of responsible persons as to the small percentage of Philadelphia teachers involved in Communist activities had not overcome the impact of 2½ days of recalcitrant testimony. That actually very little was learned about Communist Party operations was easily overlooked.

If we apply classroom principles to the mass audience the validity of a television civics lesson may be seriously questioned. The intricacies of government, the number of laws that may impinge on a given set of conditions, the long-term implications of constitutional questions currently mooted are not usually part of a merely reportorial program. The investigative procedures of a legislative committee hearing are dramatic enough to win wide attention, but they are not typical of the legislative hearings which go on constantly on hundreds of subjects. The aim of most hearings is to get citizen views on pending legislation, and a committee rarely encounters an "unfriendly" witness of the type exhibited by the investigating committees. These atypical hearings take on the aura of a criminal proceeding, which we usually associate with the courts, where entirely different rules of evidence prevail. Educational experts agree that a "lesson" which produces distortion or confusion rather than clarification is inexcusable.

Another danger of the use of "visual aids" is that these media are *for the most part* a means of popular entertainment. We live in a spectator culture, an age of mass entertainment. Is it not possible that the educational value of exposing, for instance, the ramifications of the Communist conspiracy may be vitiated by the entertaining effect of seeing implicated individuals squirming before the camera while their past is paraded before the public eye? There were not a few sensitive persons who reacted to the recent inquiries in a manner not calculated by the Congressional committee. No doubt the less sensitive enjoyed the show and had their appetites whetted for more. More than one person asked questions of the writer which indicated that they thought all of the 8,000 teachers in Philadelphia would be questioned. One point of the lesson—that the committee had provided carefully selected targets—was missed.

Finally, a misplaced faith in the educative value of the channels of mass communication may arise if we fail to remember the possibility of their exploitation by unscrupulous and ambitious men. The German nation was reeducated and reoriented by a magnetic personality in a remarkably short time. A highly literate people were seduced by the very media that should have educated them—the popular press, the radio, the public address system, and the newsreel. The Orwellian state is contemporaneous with us in the Soviet Union and Red China, where popular assent or submission to the regime is procured by "education" through the very means that one expects to liberate men's minds and widen their horizons. That mass education may not produce the effects desired by Americans is a sobering thought.

An Observation

• Dennis J. McCarthy, *Chairman*

MORAL obligations are of paramount importance in this matter of televised Congressional hearings as in all matters involving human acts. What are the moral obligations of the members of the committees and of the witnesses? Briefly stated, Congressmen should be aware that as public figures exercising great influence (especially through the medium of television), they have a great moral responsibility to see that justice is done and truth upheld. If their technique of interrogation does not give witnesses a reasonable opportunity to defend themselves and if they carefully select the "right" witnesses for televised sessions—thereby giving a distorted and false impression to the public—these men are guilty of a great moral wrong. On the other hand, a witness is morally bound to aid his government in its proper functions by giving information to Congressional committees. However, if a witness believes that he has little or no information of value to offer and, furthermore, feels in conscience that the revelation of his or others' past association with persons or organizations now considered subversive or "tainted" will be of no positive benefit to the Congress, the Government, or society, but is to be used solely or primarily to gain headlines for ambitious politicians—while perhaps injuring the position or reputation of himself or others—no moral obligation obtains, and the witness is justified in seeking the protection of the Fifth Amendment or any other legal safeguard to which he may have recourse.

Contributors

SR. M. JEANNE, O.S.F., is the editor of the *Catholic Art Quarterly*. LESLIE GARRETT recently won the Art Alliance Awards (First and Second Prizes) for the Short Story; his first novel will be published this spring by Lippincott. The Symposium is conducted by members of La Salle's Faculty. CARL MERSCHER is the designer of the Catholic Chapel at the University of Chicago. TOM KIMON DOULIS is studying the Short Story at La Salle. FRANK FORD's plays have appeared on television and at the Catholic University Playwriting Festival. BROTHER D. ADELBERT is an Assistant Professor of English at La Salle.

A NOTE: An Author and Title INDEX to Volumes I and II of four quarters is available on request.

Kingdom of the Blind

● Frank Ford

[In November *Four Quarters* presented intact the first scenes of the play. To continue in the same way would mean holding off the climax until a third issue. That would be stretching a dramatic convention too far; therefore, the remainder of the play, although approximately two-thirds of the complete work, has been constricted into the following pages.

All six central characters were introduced in the first section: MARY, a young girl lately possessed of preternatural physical strength and clairvoyance, or, to put it simply, of a devil; her former parents, JESS JOBMAN and his wife MARTHA, whose unholy alliance of seventeen years has been revealed in flashback scenes operating through Mary's quickened faculties (Martha, through fear of child-bearing, has repulsed Jess' physical advances ever since Mary's birth; Jess, in revenge, has carried out his vow to make her life a series of daily torments); FATHER BOYD, the parish priest; STURKROP, a skeptical psychologist, come to remove Mary to the city for observation; and CRAIG, a cynical newspaper reporter, looking for a good story. It is the canker at Craig's heart which is revealed in the flashback scene following upon Mary's second paroxysm. He had broken with his fiancée because she had become blind. The psychiatrist admits having seen "something" this time, crediting the girl's possession to "powers of hypnotism and mass illusion." The priest begins to suspect that, not only is the girl possessed of a "devil sure," but all present have devils, for each "an overriding evil that deforms his soul and poisons his breath in the face of God."]

MARTHA: Can't you do something?

FATHER:

Perhaps I can't but I will try.

My crucifix and book—stronger weapons than these arms deserve.
The girl is dangerous, the demon rages!
Not even with chains can he be bound,
And now against him—only a straw.

MARY: Come to me, priestling. Read your little book,

Recite your unheeded patter, make your wasted signs.

CRAIG: She's in a dangerous mood. Cater to her whims. Isn't it possible, Doctor, that ritual might have some curative worth?

PSYCH: A new treatment. Splendid. Shall we join hands at table.

Stick needles in a doll, or draw druidic markings in the mud?

MARTHA: Look, Father, your book fell open at the "Rites of Exorcism."
An omen-like.

FATHER: We don't believe in omens, that is, mostly.
God forgive me—I know not what I do.

MARY: I know, blackbird.
You run a course for which you have no breath.

FATHER: Get thee behind me, Satan.

MARY: No need of that.
Satan is already on your shoulder.

MARTHA: That's blasphemy!

MARY: The stoppage of the clock shows the breakage of the mainspring.
Go through your maniac mutter, your little purging rites;
You'll peel your own gourd; you'll not squeeze me dry.

FATHER: Dear God, a day of wrath!

MARY: Dies irae, dies illa,

FATHER: Solvet saeculum in favilla.

MARY: Strawberry, chocolate and vanilla.
(FATHER makes sign of the cross with his crucifix. The girl cringes)

MARY: Take your hands down, priest. Stop him. He's beating me.

FATHER: I command thee, Satan, or whatever name
You here assume—I abjure thee, devil,
By the living God—

MARY: If you love me,
Make him let me up. Close his hateful mouth—clamp it!
He blasphemes. He calls on names he has no right to use.

FATHER: Dear Lord, do I presume? Can the Prince of Liars tell the truth?

MARY: His Name should blister you. Do you think your God ever has forgiven you, cocksure fool?

FATHER: I have confessed.

MARY: You merely glossed a surface shadow.
You never rooted out the parasite; you've always fed the germ.

FATHER: Cleanse my heart and my lips, O almighty God, who didst
cleanse the lips of
The prophet Isaias with a burning coal.

MARY: Why pick a prayer so early in the ritual of the Mass?
Why not say the Postcommunion or the plea that goes:
O Lord, I am not worthy? Remember that prayer of your third Mass?

FATHER: Leave that wound alone. It never rightly healed.

MARY: I'd rather see it fester. Thirty years should not erase a scar.

FATHER: The pack's too heavy. He will not lend a hand to me.
Water from the side of Christ, wash me.
Lamb of God—

MARY (*reaching out and tweaking his nose*): The lamb says baa.

FATHER: Deliver us from evil, Lord; we cry to Thee.

MARY: Speak up, priestling. Your God is hard-of-hearing.

Do you think He gives ear to you who were *deaf* to Him?

FATHER: That was thirty years ago. I've been absolved, started fresh.
I was a young and foolish priest.

MARY: Now old and still foolish.

Yes, you confessed the stain but you never caught the cause of it.

Look, Shaman, at those two little altar boys of a generation back.

They were dressing in the vestry while you muttered through the Mass:

At the altar,

In a halter

A long-eared Ass

Was braying Mass.

(Dissolves into vestry of a small church. Two altar boys are conversing; in the background, chanting and the ringing of the altar bell.)

PETE: You got the ten o'clock too?

JIM: Plenty of time. Kids' mass ain't over yet.

His nibs is almost at the *non sum dignus*.

PETE: Who we got?

JIM: Hogan's saying ours.

PETE: Then who's out there? Don't tell me they trusted that new priest
with the nine.

JIM: Yeah, new and dumb. My mother says he has to get the pastor to
pronounce

All the hard words in the Gospel for him.

PETE: Button it. Here's the pastor now.

(Enter PASTOR. BOYS show great show of haste in dressing)

PASTOR: All right, young bucks, I've told you no skylarking in the vestry.

Here, you, you're the nearest ready, hold the paten for me while

I give Communion.

We can't be leaving that new priest, Fr. What-is-it—Boyd, alone

To administer to all that horde of unbritched ruffians.

(PASTOR leaves. PETE, who remains, tip-toes over to one of the wine bottles, smells it, and is tilting it to his lips, as FR. HOGAN enters)

HOGAN: Pete, put down that bottle. Why you filching little alcoholic
caffler,

I ought to pin your ears back. So that's why our wine bills are so high!

PETE: Ah, Father, it ain't been consecrated yet.

HOGAN: Well, I know that.

But consecrated or not, it's alcoholic and I'll have no pups

Guzzling the blessed but injurious grape in the vestry.

PETE: You're not really sore at me, Father, are you? You'll still play this afternoon?

HOGAN: Play, is it? You mean, instruct you fumblers in the finer points of a game I practically invented? Yes, I'll play a bit after the Ladies' Aid. But don't you change the subject. That wine—

PETE: Sure, Father, but the pastor said to hurry and help serve.

HOGAN: He did? Dear Lord, is it Communion-time already?
What do you mean distracting me? Where's my stole?
Grab a plate.

PETE: (*looking out the door*): There's time yet, Father. He's genuflecting for the Dominus.

Why don't that dumb kid ring? Gosh, that ain't the Dominus.
He passed it minutes back. He's on both knees and groaning.
Father look! The pastor's run to him. He's rolling on the altar step,
Crying and mumbling.

HOGAN: Get out of me way, if you're kidding me . . . (*exits*)

PETE: Wait till I tell the folks. Heck, got the next Mass to go.
All them kids will have it blabbed around before I get a chance.

(*FATHER enters supported by PASTOR and HOGAN*)

PASTOR: Stop that blubbering, man. You, get some water quick.
You heard me, move!

Pull yourself together. You're a priest. You've got a Mass to finish.

FATHER: I can't finish it. I never really started it.

HOGAN: He's sick, Father.
Let me vest and finish it for him.

PASTOR: Finish it for him!
What do you think you're talking of, a hand of bridge?
Finish it for him! Who finished Mass for that Eyetalian priest
That an enemy of his had put sulphuric acid in the wine?
He finished it himself and drank up all the wine that had become
God's blood and went outside after it was over to die decently.
Who finished Mass I'd like to know, for the martyr priests
In those catacombs, what with being murdered and diseased
And hounded by the Roman soldiers? They finished up their Mass,
And so will he.

FATHER: I can't finish it.

PASTOR: Maybe, just in case, Hogan, put on your robes,
And get these goggle-eyed altar boys out of here.

HOGAN: Yes, out you two. Here Pete,
You're in the eighth grade—see Sister Mary Rose and explain to her—
What will he say, Father?

PASTOR: Explain to her! Never mind explanations.
On second thought, Sister Mary Rose—tell her the Father's sick.

FATHER: I'm not sick.

PASTOR: And if you're not, you're sicker than you think.

Well, get out of here, scat! Those little boys are worse than women.

HOGAN: I'll robe for Mass.

PASTOR: Do it! Don't tell me about it. Dear God,

The way things are round here I wonder I don't have to pass

The collection-plates too. Well, man, speak up, what ails you?

Appendicitis? Stomach cramp? That bad-cooked rectory food?

FATHER: I've told you before, Father. I'm not sick. I wish I were.

PASTOR: Then get back out there on that altar.

FATHER: I can't.

PASTOR: As your pastor I order you.

FATHER (*rising weakly*): Then I'll go.

PASTOR: Now you're acting like a man.

FATHER: What type of man—a soldier at the crucifixion?

I'm going since you wish me to compound a sacrilege.

PASTOR: Come back here. Sit down. What sacrilege?

FATHER: The Mass I seemed to say.

How could I make it clear to you—you that are always sure?

PASTOR: Never mind about me. Sureness is easy. A place for everything—

FATHER: And where's the place for me? Before the Cross of Christ a moment back

I prayed "O Lord I am not worthy," and I realized that I'm not.

PASTOR: Praiseworthy humility. None of us are worthy. But we do the job

God gave to us, and He sends us grace.

FATHER: To you, to Father Hogan,

Yes, He sends grace; not to me. I held the clean bread

In my hands at the Consecration and willed it to become

Christ's white unceasing body. But it didn't, that I know.

Why should it? Not even God could make me worth that miracle.

PASTOR: What heathen blab is this? Think, man, what you're saying.

Of course, the Host will taste like bread.

FATHER: I know it well.

It wasn't taste or touch—just the sureness God wouldn't come to me.

That's why I cried at the altar, why I couldn't finish it.

PASTOR: Despair and blasphemy!

FATHER: I know that too. Don't you see?
It's that my soul's so dwarfed I slipped through the net of grace.
I'm too low for even God to stretch a hand to.

PASTOR: Doubt! Disbelief! A priest of mine!
Of course, I'll bring this to the bishop. He'll ship you out.

FATHER: What could I expect? God's thrown me to the fiend,
And hell sits already on my tongue. Father, where is God?

PASTOR: You're a priest of God, man. Talk like one.

FATHER: No, that I'm not.
I'm a thousand things but none of them a priest.
I never should have tried. I can't be one now or ever.

PASTOR: Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchisidech.

FATHER: Yes, but a rag-doll priest that God discards. God forgive me.
(BLACKOUT)

MARY (*Spot on her alone*):
Why not turn stones to bread,
Strike water from a rock?
You've pressed thorns in His head,
And shorn wool from His flock.
Assist His scourging, priest;
Spear water from His side;
Gird for the funeral feast,
Now that your God has died.

(*Lights up to include all*)

FATHER: Oh my God.

MARY: Pray on, little psalmist.

MARTHA: Father, don't give in.

MARY: All things will I give thee, if bowing down thou wilt adore me.

FATHER: How can I find a word of prayer? It's fitting that I can't.

Sure I'm a priest forever; of course, I confessed that sin.

But she's right: whatever spawned that sin is still with me.

I didn't finish that Mass; do you think I could complete an Exorcism?
I've failed.

PSYCH: Quite obviously. Now meet it squarely.

FATHER: I can face my failure.
I can't face my God.

CRAIG: I can face your failure too.
But who's to face the winner, that one—her—him—or it?

[CURTAIN]

[The Second Act opens with Mary—quieter but still controlled by some evil influence—attempting to seduce Craig by assuming the personality of his ruined love, Suzanne. He recoils in horror, convinced of her

very real possession. But the psychologist is relieved, for he has a peg now for his diagnosis. ("The base is simple—sexual aberration.") The priest comes on the scene.]

(A cross appears in the doorway, waving frantically. Priest stumbles in.)

MARTHA: Thank God, it's only you.

FATHER: Thank God you're real.

I was asleep with a nightmare like a bat in my head
I saw myself calmly nailing a group of boards together.
When all at once two of the boards turned to bloody feet.
And I looked up and saw a crown of thorns.
A drop of blood spattered my hand, and, as I watched,
Ate its way through hair and flesh until I screamed and woke.
And then I heard a man's wild shouting answer from below.
One of you I guess.

CRAIG: I'm the one.

FATHER: Then I was awake—I thought so.

I tried to jump out of bed but I couldn't stir.
There was a thing glowering in the corner of the room.
No sight you could describe, no real shape, just a pulsing,
And a thin voice without real sound kept hooting at me.
"Lost, lost, lost, lost," like that, like a ghost metronome.

PSYCH: Perhaps I'd better make an appointment for you. Your dreams at least aren't quite run-of-the-notebook.

MARTHA: Sit down, poor man.

CRAIG: Don't sharp at him. He's overstrained. What happened then, Padre?

FATHER: I said an ejaculation, unfroze, and ran out,
But I couldn't seem to find my way—kept hearing whispers,
And saw a greenness sliding after me. That's when I screamed
And ran downstairs.

JESS: There's some liquor left in your bottle.
Give him a belt, if you can bear to part with it.

CRAIG: Have a drink. I find I can spare it.

FATHER: No thanks, let me catch my breath.

PSYCH: Yes, generate a head of steam. Conjure up new incantations.
You're covered quite with glory from your match this afternoon.
Why don't you grapple with your devil once again?

Good spectator sport,
Although no doubt trying to its contestants.

CRAIG: Let him alone.

PSYCH: He's needed. Your little devil's raising hell—even was so presumptuous as to try to violate the maiden Craig. Have you a prayer for such occasions,

Or will you make an offering of yourself?

FATHER:

I have a prayer—

For you, to open up your eyes; for her, that she may close hers tight.

PSYCH: Open up my eyes to what? To your phantom devil?

FATHER: Why do you fight belief so hard?

PSYCH:

I do believe—

In my work. I made a solemn pledge once to myself

Not to let ancient fogs slip between my eye and microscope.

I say science alone creates the world from chaos.

Slide-rules we need, not crosses; retorts, not incense jars.

Forget all your shoon of Jewish tribal gods.

There is no God but Science; in it only lies our present saving.

There are no evils but the shrouds we weave ourselves.

MARY: Then why not feed the loom and weave your private shroud?

MARTHA: Dear Lord, she's up to more mischief.

CRAIG:

You've got the finger now.

FATHER: Sancta Maria, Mater, Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus. . . .

PSYCH: I'm wary of her traps. Let her air her parlor tricks.

MARY: My bookish barber friend, a pageant is in the making.

Would you like to star?

PSYCH: I suppose she'll try her little sham again. Well, simply handled.

Let her try her damndest. You'll see what foolishness this is.

CRAIG:

Better get out, Doctor.

You've at least had a warning. If your subconscious slips

What doctor could we get to doctor you?

PSYCH:

I'm not a running man.

MARY: No, not a running man, but shall I strip your other masks

And show you what manner man you are?

PSYCH:

Belch-wind.

Where's the lightning and the madness you say she has on leash?

Oh, my simple friends, are you not now convinced that I am free,
that man is only free when he has banished his banshees, gutted
his gods?

*(Lights up on a sickbed in which a woman past middle age, gaunt with pain, is lying.
PSYCH, barely seen, stands silhouetted at the foot of her bed.)*

MOTHER: Well, son, you're back.

PSYCH: I've been back two weeks.

MOTHER: Then I'm the one that's back.

PSYCH: Yes, I've never seen such a coma.

MOTHER: Time you did. Need experience. Shouldn't be anything you've not seen. Let me look at you. Resemble me more than your father, praise be.

PSYCH: I know. I came soon as exams were done.

MOTHER: Exams over, eh? Then you're a doctor now. Humph! Are you a good one?

PSYCH: You're a patient now. How do you stack up? Are you a good one?

MOTHER: You're hard boiled. Tough as saddle leather. Good. I haven't failed.

PSYCH: Hard enough. We both are that. That's something I've always meant to ask. Never had the nerve before. Why'd you marry my late father anyway? Hardly a fit partner.

MOTHER: Damned if I know. He was wet and soft as new cheese but I guess every woman loves a dreamer at some time. Yet they never brick into manhood. He found his dreams in bottles. Where do you go for yours?

PSYCH: I have no time for dreams, just work.

MOTHER: Good again. I might learn to like you, if I had the time. Sit down. Tell me straight, when will I die?

PSYCH: How hard am I to be?

MOTHER: Enough. We need no formal pleasantries, no pansy postures. I'm dying fast, I hope?

PSYCH: It's been that painful?

MOTHER: The customary word is hell.

PSYCH: I've checked everywhere—consulted specialists:
There's nothing beyond what your own doctors told you:
You may live a year at most.

MOTHER: A year? Oh, never that. What's the least, the shortest time?

PSYCH: I—I don't really know.

MOTHER: A catch from you? I'll tell you then. The shortest time is now.

PSYCH: The time is when it comes, when it's meant in nature.

MOTHER: Pollyanna pap!

PSYCH: You're too hard for me. I'm human.

MOTHER: Guess you are. Human's not enough.

PSYCH: All right, I won't be human. You ask for death, I refuse.

MOTHER: No sampler sonship now. Don't look on it as killing me. Just rooting out my pain. You're clever. You must have learned a thousand ways a doctor can exterminate with safety.

PSYCH: That part of it is easy. These shots they're giving you—I could simply overload the needle and say you did it.

MOTHER: Then do it now. Even if I should weaken, sink it deep.

PSYCH: Why should I?

MOTHER: Because you owe it to me and I request it. That should suffice. I guess you love me well enough in your antiseptic way, as much as I have let you. Prove it.

PHYCH: All the world's against it. You know that. They call it murder.

MOTHER: Don't sponge up Christian codes. You know the rules I taught you. Follow them. Stop sentimentalizing death. No time for a coffin conscience.

PSYCH: I see your reasons, but I couldn't do it.

MOTHER: Why not break down and slobber?

PSYCH: You never broke, did you? You buried my father without a backward glance.

MOTHER: More than that; with a feeling of extreme satisfaction.

PSYCH: Would it be fair to say he drank himself to death?

MOTHER: Even an understatement.

PSYCH: Why'd you let him do it? He bounced off your shell and splashed into a bottle.

MOTHER: Yes, and as soon as he was there, I drove in the cork.

He was no good, a rotten tooth that had to go,

But you must admit he went anesthetized.

PSYCH: You married him. He must have had some good in him.

I was only twelve when he died—don't remember clearly

But I think I rather liked him—even liked the smell of whiskey on his breath.

MOTHER: He had no shred of substance worth the salvage,

Just his infernal wistful charm that polluted everyone

Flabbed our tissues, wasted our savings, dragged us down

To his dereliction. Had he lived he would have smothered us

In the bog of his glass-lined, effervescent pig-sty.

PSYCH: You may be right. You always are. And so he had to go.

But why must you?

MOTHER: Easy. For my own pride, your career and simple justice.

I'm an ulcerated tooth to be extracted, nothing more.

PSYCH: Easily said, but extraction's not that easy on the mind.

Would you have strength to drive the needle, were I in your place?

MOTHER: Of course I would. The only way to live is with a core of iron.

I've told you that. Obviously you've forgotten.

I want steel, not marrow, in your bones.

PSYCH: I doubt even you would have that much steel.

MOTHER: You want proof? Get out your notebook, student.
I've one lecture left.

PSYCH: I know you're clever, but lectures don't make acts.
We couldn't kill.

MOTHER: We couldn't? You don't dream the truth about your father.
Not only did I know he was driving for a grave, I helped him
dredge it. How do you think he always found so much to drink?
I gave it to him. When he'd wake up fully-dressed on a chair or
couch, do you think I greeted him with juices and wet cloths?
No, he always found within easy reach—another bottle. I had
the insides to know what I wanted and to work it out.

PSYCH: I see you did. I bow to you. You keep a secret well. You
always get your way. You will again. You're right.

MOTHER: Now you're talking sense. More like the son I raised—less
of your father's champagne mysticism.

PSYCH: You should not have been a woman. As a man,
You would have conquered armies, swung a sword of fire,
Purified the world.

MOTHER: I'm happy, now. You're a man, finally.

PSYCH: Is now too soon or should we chat a bit?

MOTHER: Now's the time. We've always said all we had to say.
(BLACKOUT)

(Light up on MARY)

MARY: Give her body to the black rain,
Stow her swiftly in her grave:
Will she see the drunk stars reel
From the worm-holes in her cave?
Scatter ashes to the white wind,
Empty cosmos from the cup;
Do you think that once thrust down
Human cork can bobble up?

(Lights up on PSYCH, who is crouching)

PSYCH: There was no hereafter for her death. She couldn't live.
Why do you stare? Twenty years is too weak a salve,
But the healer never heals himself.
Don't look at me with jury faces. You saw it, I suppose?
You see I'm right; I did a mercy, didn't I?
Answer me. I didn't spill my mother's blood.
No drop leaked out. I operated on a pain; I didn't kill,
Just legalized a broken lease, filled a fair prescription.

MARY: The paeon that the truth makes free
Becomes at last a threnody!

The more truth's dragged before men's eyes,
The more they veil the truth with lies.

PSYCH: You, you're the real killer. She's the murderer.
She's the plague of our sanity, virus of our peace.
Why had you to spill the one secret of my life?
Or are there others I don't recall? Search them out,
Parade them for this small crowd of intimate friends.
Laugh, damn you, enjoy the comedy you create.
Turn on your fireworks, dance on ceilings,
Spit out horned toads, show us documentary films!

MARY: Dear Doctor, you're on pins and needles.
All your little pins are sins.
And all your needles hypodermic needles.

PSYCH: Shut up. You'd love to see me crack, wouldn't you?

MARY: Is this the bedrock sureness, the hard-shelled mind?
Is this scientific pureness—the kingdom of the blind?

PSYCH: What do you want—to rhyme my reason out of me?

MARY: The man who has no brother wears a locket of his mother;
The man who does a killing has a cavity for filling.

PSYCH (*pacing about*): What I did was justice, nothing less, nothing
more.

I'm not alone, not alone—there are others who released.
Some have done it, as I did, with needles, some with drugs,

(*Picks up carving knife from table*)

Others by a skillful carelessness with the scalpel,
A slip of a hundredth of an inch.

(*Becomes conscious of knife as knife*)

And here's a tongue to answer yours—to try that hundredth of an inch.
A pointed argument—let your devil grasp it by the blade.

(*He goes after MARY. CRAIG steps up to him and knocks the knife out of his hand.
It lands next to MARY.*)

JESS: Get him!

CRAIG: Who's off his pivot now? You're madder than she is.

JESS: Come away from her. How many kinds of fool are you?

PSYCH (*dazed*): I lost my head. I've really lost my head. Help me find it.

MARY: Humpty-Dumpty split his crown
And gloomed upon his shattered shell,
His mother's blood came dripping down
And washed the fragments into hell.

PSYCH: I almost wish I had a God to swear by, so I could curse her soul.
Not that she has a soul.

[They attempt to pray. Martha acknowledges her past guilt and, in an effort at reconciliation, goes to embrace Mary; but the girl stabs her in the breast and she dies. Mary comes into control of her senses and goes to her mother's side. Jess in a rage punches her full on the mouth. Craig and the psychologist struggle to subdue him.]

CRAIG: Martha's dead. You can't undo that. Besides I thought you hated her.

JESS: I thought so too. I guess I did. I hardly knew her—

I guess you can't love without hating or hate without loving.

I'm all mixed up—the whole business is, too: a marriage without bed, a hate without a split, a love without kindness—she's dead now.

CRAIG: She died happily, I think.

JESS: She did look happy. That was my first clear sight of her.

I only looked at her these twenty years to glare, spoke to growl.

I couldn't see her free of smoke and ingrown sickness.

Now she's dead, and I don't know how to remember her.

CRAIG: There must have been a time you were in love with her.

Think back to that.

JESS: In our courtship I never really saw her either.

What man does? She showed up pretty through a haze—she was pretty.

Would you believe it? I knew less of her than if she'd been a colt.

CRAIG: I'm sure she saw death coming and didn't care about it any more.

She'd learned to love your daughter.

JESS: Yeah, so late for the kid, but really love. And her so scared of death! And me without no love for life—what did I do? Nothing. What was it in her that I always missed, what strange thing that could fear so hard yet love so hard? She handed over life, like it was a weed with tassels. Maybe I killed her.

PSYCH (*rising from his examination*): No morbid imaginings now. Your daughter's not too seriously harmed.

CRAIG: How can I help you? It seems I should. We both took related poisons; maybe there's a common antidote.

JESS: I think I'll do like the priest expects. Come with me, will you?

(MARY becomes conscious, groggily shakes her head. The green light dances about her without touching her)

MARY: Oh, mother, mother. I wish I were a little girl again,

With you to sing to me, or never had been born.

VOICE: Oh Mary was a little lamb

Her soul was white as snow

But lo, the foal has killed her dam.

Where now will the little soul go?

MARY: Go away, please, go. Haven't you done enough?

VOICE: Yes, I hope I have, but you haven't yet—not quite.

Besides, what inconsistency—you just asked me to return.

MARY: Sweet Jesus, what have I done?

VOICE: That's right, stupid child, call upon your God.

He will not answer. Did He not allow me to do this

Through your hands? Look at your hands, child,

There's blood on them and on your precious soul.

MARY: My God would not do that.

VOICE: He's strong enough to stop even me, and yet He did not.

Your God is fat-witted and complacent. I tell you He permitted this.

Where is his celebrated justice?

MARY (*raising her hands and rocking on her heels, in tears*): I wish He'd hacked my arms off at the elbows first.

VOICE: He didn't though. And I'd have made you simply kill her with your teeth.

MARY: Dear Lord, did I commit so great a sin?

Could God have wanted this to happen? Could He have known?

VOICE: Of course he did, dolt. Surely if He's supposed to mark the sparrows, he takes some passing notice of a killing or a war.

(CRAIG, JESS, PSYCH and FATHER come to the door to track down noise)

MARY: I will not listen to you.

VOICE: Your mother's wheeze and cough have stopped your ears.

MARY: You killed my mother; I didn't.

VOICE: No, my murdering pet, you did. You weren't born

With hands that color. They give you the lie.

MARY: That's not true. You know hands are only tools, levers, wrenches. You did it.

VOICE: And what if I did?

I did it with your loving little Lord's allowing.

Look now with a clear eye on the frozen stony face of God.

Can you still love such a God?

MARY: I don't know. You press too close. (*Retreats; light follows her*)

VOICE: No closer than the bodies of the dead.

MARY: God has a garden.

VOICE: Choked with weeds.

MARY: God is a lover.

VOICE: With poison on his lips.

MARY: God is a saviour.

VOICE: Who speeds you to damnation.

MARY: Stop it. The things you say cut.

VOICE: His word snipped off your mother.

MARY: You are a receipt for my sins.

VOICE: I came because you haven't sinned. What now do you think of such a twisted deity?

MARY: I love Him.

VOICE: Does He love you, do you think? You give Him wine;
He sours it. He kills the things you love.

MARY: He does not kill; we do.

VOICE: He kills through you. Did He not create you?

MARY: He puts the food in my mouth.

VOICE: And a fork in your belly, and that knife in your mother's side.

MARY: I mustn't believe this; oh my God, keep me from hating you.

VOICE: He will not. He cannot. You are more God than He.

MARY: I have tried. I have loved. Why now this, dear Lord?

VOICE: That's the question all with eyes and heads must ask.
Now answer it yourself.

MARY: You're too strong. Let me breathe.

VOICE: Breathe then. Breathe freedom. Spit freely in the face of God.
You're strong. You can walk without Him, loosened from His petulance.

MARY: The little strength I have is the strength He gave me.

VOICE: I can give you strength.
I can give you any power you'd ever want:
To walk the mountaintops and swat the stars,
To chuckle cosmos into chaos, start a war,
To be a queen, a goddess, even topple God,
To tumble Him by His heel, His pathetic softness.

MARY: I don't want to swat the stars—just to reach them.
He gives you more strength than me—what can you do?
You can't ever touch the stars. You can't touch me.

VOICE: I—I am strong, I tell you.

MARY: Why you're not strong! You're too weak for even me.

VOICE: How can you say that when you've seen my work?

MARY: That's it. You've said too much. I can see your work.
You can't damn me—you can use my body as a toy,
Saddle my flesh and ride it, but you can't reach me inside.
You're weak without us, without our willing help.
We can make you work for God.

VOICE: I work for God?

MARY: Yes, even you, without meaning to.

You thought you'd drive me down. You've raised me up.

You whipped our priest, but he'll stand straighter for it.

You tried to break my mother. Instead, you healed her.

VOICE: You're mine. You have no choice.

MARY:

I have a choice

Between my Lord and you. I've made my choice.

God is my love, my heart, my home, my hope.

(MARY collapses. CRAIG and PSYCH rush to her.)

CRAIG: She won, Padre, didn't she?

FATHER: She's won her battle. She won mine, too.

Go, Satan, leave us now. Roam where else you will.

You may seem to win, but you'll always lose.

Exi ab ea, immunde spiritus, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti!

(Makes three signs of the cross. On last one window lights up with blinding green flash! MARY takes several steps forward, blesses herself radiantly and collapses. PSYCH goes to her.)

PSYCH: I can scarcely hear her heart. It's growing faint.

It's that strain. My bag! Adrenalin! Be quick, this girl's dying!

MARY: Is that a needle? Do you always use a needle?

PSYCH: This is for your good.

MARY: Then why do you have blood on both your hands?

PSYCH: Your mother's blood. I'll wipe it off.

MARY: Your mother's blood, too. That won't come off.

PSYCH: Nonsense. See, my hands are wiped clean of blood.

(MARY shakes her head No)

PSYCH: She's insane again—imagining things.

JESS: Mary, kid, you've got to fight to live. I got to make you happy.

MARY: I'm happy now. I always was.

FATHER:

Yes, she was good.

PSYCH: If she was good, she's dying of her goodness

But I owe her something for reminding me—

I rather liked my father. I wish I could

Give her life. I can't. She's had too much strain—torture.

MARY: I was happy even then. Down inside me

Where the devil couldn't catch. I couldn't help but be.

I was never so completely resting in the lap of Christ.

(MARY's head falls on JESS' shoulder.)

FATHER: I will go up to the altar of God; to God who gives joy to my youth.

[CURTAIN]

Adam

● Brother D. Adelbert, F.S.C.

Automaton is Adam not, not Man,
Nor Ape nor Angel; Adam is Body-Soul only,
Mind nestled in Blood-and-Bone is Adam.

Automaton is only Atom cocked
For Act, slotted for drop of Adam's penny,
Robot motion of metal, shining but brittle.

Ape is only Instinct in a twist of Brain,
Jack Lak-logic, born for sightless yearning,
Fashioned to feed and breed, for hunger and gender.

Angel is Mind-Soul, fleshless envisioning
Of Golden Light by Light, enlightened alembic
Distilling love like liquid, crystaling wisdom

Betwixt the Ape and Angel is Eden's Adam,
Entwined of Mind and Matter, but not twinned,
Not two—nor Mind sole nor Body lone stands
As Man, but composition, both in one—

Both Mind and Blood-and-Bone criss-crossed by God
And CHRIST-CROSSED (My God!) by washing water welled
From that speared Side, the Wishing-Well, the stricken
Rock and Corner-Stone of Adam's dear
Atonement, atomized in God's dear Blood.



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